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by Bob "Dr. Mac" LeVitus

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About the Author

Bob LeVitus, often referred to as "Dr. Mac," has written or co-written more than 60 popular computer books, including *iPhone For Dummies, iPad For Dummies, Incredible iPad Apps For Dummies, Incredible iPhone Apps For Dummies, OS X For Dummies* for every version of OS X for John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; *Stupid Mac Tricks* and *Dr. Macintosh* for Addison-Wesley; and *The Little iTunes Book* and *The Little iDVD Book* for Peachpit Press. His books have sold more than a million copies worldwide.

Bob has penned the popular Dr. Mac column for the *Houston Chronicle* since 1996 and has been published in dozens of computer magazines over the past 25 years. His achievements have been documented in major media around the world. (Yes, that was him juggling a keyboard in *USA Today* a few years back!)

Bob is known for his expertise, trademark humorous style, and ability to translate techie jargon into usable and fun advice for regular folks. Bob is also a prolific public speaker, presenting more than 100 Macworld Expo training sessions in the U.S. and abroad, keynote addresses in three countries, and Macintosh training seminars in many U.S. cities. (He also won the Macworld Expo MacJeopardy World Championship three times before retiring his crown.)

Bob is considered a leading authority on Apple technology. From 1989 to 1997, he was a contributing editor/columnist for *MacUser* magazine, writing the Help Folder, Beating the System, Personal Best, and Game Room columns at various times.

In his copious spare time, Bob heads up a team of expert technical consultants who do nothing but provide technical help and training to Mac, iPhone, and iPad users via telephone, e-mail, and/or a unique Internet-enabled remote control software, which allows the team to see and control your Mac no matter where in the world you may be.

If you're having problems with your Mac, you ought to give them a try. You'll find them at `www.boblevitus.com` or 408-627-7577.

Prior to giving his life over to computers, LeVitus spent years at Kresser/Craig/D.I.K. (a Los Angeles advertising agency and marketing consultancy) and its subsidiary, L & J Research. He holds a B.S. in marketing from California State University.

Dedication

For the sixty-fourth time, this book is dedicated to the love of my life, my wife and best friend, Lisa, who taught me almost everything I know about almost everything I know except computers.

And, again for the sixth-fourth time, this book is also dedicated to my kids, Allison and Jacob, who love their Apple gadgets almost as much as I love them (the kids, not the Apple gadgets).

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And finally, thanks to you, gentle reader, for buying this book.

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Introduction

You made the right choice twice: OS X Mountain Lion and this book. Take a deep breath, and get ready to have a rollicking good time. That's right. This is a computer book, but it's fun. What a concept! Whether you're brand spanking new to the Mac or a grizzled Mac vet, I guarantee that reading this book to discover the ins and outs of OS X Mountain Lion will make everything easier. The publisher couldn't say as much on the cover if it weren't true!

About This Book

This book's roots lie with my international best seller *Macintosh System 7.5 For Dummies,* an award-winning book so good that now-deceased Mac cloner Power Computing gave away a copy with every Mac clone it sold. *OS X Mountain Lion For Dummies* is the latest revision and has been, once again, completely updated to include all the OS X goodness in Mountain Lion. In other words, this edition combines all the old, familiar features of previous editions — but is once again updated to reflect the latest and greatest offering from Apple as well as feedback from readers.

Why write a *For Dummies* book about Mountain Lion? Well, Mountain Lion is a big, somewhat complicated personal-computer operating system. So I made *OS X Mountain Lion For Dummies* a not-so-big, not-very-complicated book that shows you what Mountain Lion is all about without boring you to tears, confusing you, or poking you with sharp objects.

In fact, I think you'll be so darned comfortable that I wanted the title to be *OS X Mountain Lion Without Discomfort,* but the publishers wouldn't let me. Apparently, we *For Dummies* authors have to follow some rules and using *For Dummies* and *OS X Mountain Lion* in this book's title are among them.

And speaking of *dummies,* remember that's just a word. I don't think you're dumb — quite the opposite! My second choice for this book's title was *OS X Mountain Lion For People Smart Enough to Know They Need Help with It,* but you can just imagine what Wiley thought of that. ("C'mon, that's the whole point of the name!" they insisted. "Besides, it's shorter our way.")

The book is chock-full of information and advice, explaining everything you need to know about OS X in language you can understand — along with time-saving tips, tricks, techniques, and step-by-step instructions, all served up in generous quantities.

What You Won't Find in This Book

Another rule we *For Dummies* authors must follow is that our books cannot exceed a certain number of pages. (Brevity is the soul of wit, and all that.) So I wish I could have included some things, but they didn't fit. Although I feel confident you'll find everything you need to know about OS X Mountain Lion in this book, some things bear further looking into, including these:

- **Information about some of the applications (programs) that come with OS X Mountain Lion:** An installation of OS X Mountain Lion includes roughly 50 separate applications, mostly located in the Applications folder and the Utilities folder within it. I'd love to walk you through each one of them, but that would have required a book a whole lot bigger, heavier, and more expensive than this one.

  I brief you on the small handful of bundled applications essential to using OS X Mountain Lion and keep the focus there — namely, Calendar, Contacts, Messages, Mail, Safari, TextEdit, and the like, as well as important utilities you may need to know how to use someday.

  For what it's worth, many books cover the applications that come with OS X Mountain Lion, as well as applications commonly bundled with Mountain Lion on a new Mac, such as iLife; the one my publisher suggested I recommend is *OS X Mountain Lion All-in-One For Dummies,* written by Mark L. Chambers, which is (of course) also published by Wiley.
- **Information about Microsoft Office, iLife, iWork, Adobe Photoshop, Quicken, and most other third-party applications:** Okay, if all the gory details of all the bundled (read: *free)* OS X Mountain Lion applications don't fit here, I think you'll understand why digging into third-party applications that cost extra was out of the question.
- **Information about programming for the Mac:** This book is about *using* OS X Mountain Lion, not writing code for it. Dozens of books cover programming on the Mac, most of which are two or three times the size of this book.

Conventions Used in This Book

To get the most out of this book, you need to know how I do things and why. Here are a few conventions I use in this book to make your life easier:

- When I want you to open an item in a menu, I write something like "Choose File⇨Open," which means, "Pull down the File menu and choose the Open command."
- Stuff you're supposed to type appears in bold type, **like this**.

- **Sometimes an entire a sentence is in boldface, as you see when I present a numbered list of steps. In those cases, I leave the bold off what you're supposed to type,** like this**.**
- Web addresses, programming code (not much in this book), and things that appear on-screen are shown in a special monofont typeface, `like this`. (If you're reading an ebook version of this book, web addresses are clickable links.)
- For keyboard shortcuts, I write something like ⌘+A, which means to hold down the ⌘ key (the one with the little pretzel and/or symbol on it) and then press the A key on the keyboard. If you see something like ⌘+Shift+A, that means to hold down the ⌘ and Shift keys while pressing the A key. Again, for clarity, I never refer to the ⌘ key with the symbol. I reserve that symbol for the menu (Apple menu). For the Command key, I use only the ⌘ symbol. Got it? Very cool.

Foolish Assumptions

Although I know what happens when you make assumptions, I've made a few anyway. First, I assume that you, gentle reader, know nothing about using OS X — beyond knowing what a Mac is, that you want to use OS X, that you want to understand OS X without having to digest an incomprehensible technical manual, and that you made the right choice by selecting this particular book. And so I do my best to explain each new concept in full and loving detail. Maybe that's foolish, but . . . oh well.

Oh, and I also assume that you can read. If you can't, ignore this paragraph.

How This Book Is Organized

OS X Mountain Lion For Dummies is divided into six logical parts, numbered (surprisingly enough) 1 through 6. By no fault of mine, they're numbered using those stuffy old Roman numerals, so you see I–VI where you (in my humble opinion) ought to see Arabic numbers 1–6. It's another rule that *For Dummies* authors have to follow, I think.

Anyway, it's better if you read the parts in order, but if you already know a lot — or think you know a lot — feel free to skip around and read the parts that interest you most.

Part I: Introducing OS X Mountain Lion: The Basics: This first part is very, very basic training. From the mouse to the Desktop, from menus, windows, and icons to the snazzy-but-helpful Dock, it's all here. A lot of what you need

to know to navigate the depths of OS X safely (and sanely) and perform basic tasks can be found in this part. And although old-timers might just want to skim it, newcomers should probably read every word. Twice.

Part II: Mountain Lion Taming (Or "Organization for Smart People"): In this part, I build on the basics of Part I and really get you revving with your Mac. Here, I cover additional topics that every Mac user needs to know, coupled with some hands-on, step-by-step instructions. The part starts with a closer look at ways you can organize your files and folders, followed by a chapter about using removable media (which means *ejectable discs* — mostly CDs and DVDs). Last, but certainly not least, is a chapter about all the Mountain Lion applications (such as Calendar, Contacts, Messages, and Mail) that help you keep your digital life organized.

Part III: Do Unto Mountain Lion: Getting Things Done: This part is chock-full of ways to do productive stuff with your Mac. You discover the Internet — or at least how to get it working on your Mac and what to do with it after you do. Next, you look at the digital-media side of things with chapters about music, video, games, and digital photos. Finally, you look at Mountain Lion's built-in tools for writing — namely, TextEdit and fonts.

Part IV: Making This Mountain Lion Your Very Own: Here, I get into the nitty-gritty underbelly of making OS X Mountain Lion work the way you want it to work. I start with the ins and outs of printing under OS X. Then I move on to somewhat more advanced topics, such as file sharing, creating and using multiple user accounts (and why you might want to), and the lowdown on numerous OS X Mountain Lion features — Text to Speech, speech recognition, automation, and more — that can make your computing experience even more pleasant.

Part V: The Care and Feeding of Your Mountain Lion: This part starts with a chapter about backups and security, which not only stresses the importance of backing up your data, but also shows you how to do it almost painlessly. I introduce you to a handful of useful utilities included with Mountain Lion, and explain when and how to use them. Finally, I tell you how to avoid most disasters, as well as what to do in the event that a major mishap does occur.

Part VI: The Part of Tens: Finally, it's The Part of Tens, which might have started life as a Letterman rip-off but does include heaping helpings of tips, optional software, great Mac websites, and hardware ideas.

Appendix: Last, but certainly not least, I cover installing or reinstalling OS X Mountain Lion in the Appendix. The whole process has become quite easy with this version of the system software, but if you have to install Mountain Lion yourself, it would behoove you to read this helpful Appendix first.

Icons Used in This Book

Little round pictures (icons) appear off to the left side of the text throughout this book. Consider these icons miniature road signs, telling you a little something extra about the topic at hand. Here's what the different icons look like and what they all mean.

Look for Tip icons to find the juiciest morsels: shortcuts, tips, and undocumented secrets about Mountain Lion. Try them all; impress your friends!

When you see this icon, it means that this particular morsel is something that I think you should memorize (or at least write on your shirt cuff).

Put on your propeller-beanie hat and pocket protector; these parts include the truly geeky stuff. It's certainly not required reading, but it must be interesting or informative, or I wouldn't have wasted your time with it.

Read these notes very, very, very carefully. (Did I say *very?*) Warning icons flag important cautionary information. The author and publisher won't be responsible if your Mac explodes or spews flaming parts because you ignored a Warning icon. Just kidding. Macs don't explode or spew (with the exception of a few choice PowerBook 5300s, which won't run Mountain Lion anyway). But I got your attention, didn't I?

These icons represent my ranting or raving about something that either bugs me or makes me smile. When I'm ranting, imagine foam coming from my mouth. Rants are required to be irreverent, irrelevant, or both. I try to keep them short, for your sake.

Well, now, what could this icon possibly be about? Named by famous editorial consultant Mr. Obvious, this icon highlights all things new and different in OS X Mountain Lion.

Where to Go from Here

The first few chapters of this book are where I describe the basic things that you need to understand to operate your Mac effectively. If you're new to Macs and OS X Mountain Lion, start there.

Even though OS X Mountain Lion is somewhat different from previous Mac operating systems, the first part of the book is so basic that if you've been

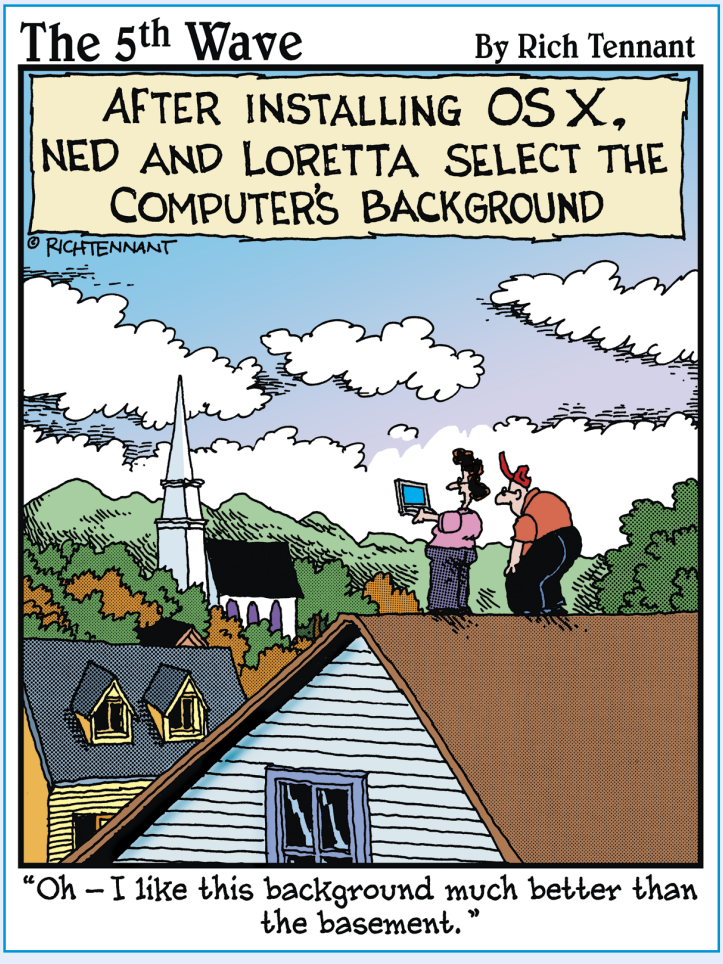
using a Mac for long, you might think you know it all — and okay, you might know most of it. But hey! Not-so-old-timers need a solid foundation. So here's my advice: Skip the stuff you know; you'll get to the better stuff faster.

I would love to hear how this book worked for you. So please send me your thoughts, platitudes, likes and dislikes, and any other comments. Did this book work for you? What did you like? What didn't you like? What questions were unanswered? Did you want to know more (or less) about something? Tell me! I have received more than 100 suggestions about previous editions, most of which are incorporated here. So keep up the good work! E-mail me at `MountainLion4Dummies@boblevitus.com`. I appreciate your feedback, and I *try* to respond to all reasonably polite e-mail within a few days.

So what are you waiting for? Go — enjoy the book!

Part I

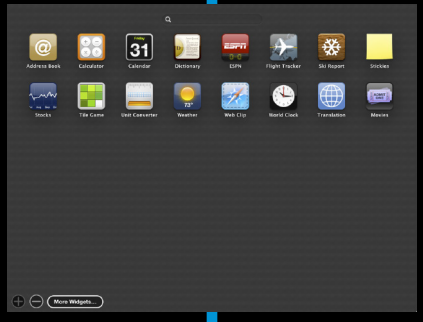
Introducing OS X Mountain Lion: The Basics

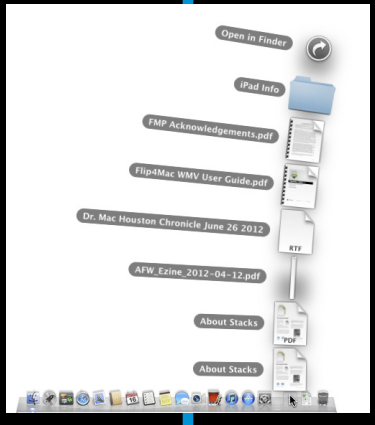


In this part . . .

Because I believe it's important to crawl before you walk, in this part, you get a look at the most basic of basics — such as how to turn on your Mac. Next, I acquaint you with the OS X Finder, with its Desktop, windows, icons, and menus (oh my)! Then you find out how to make this cat your own by customizing your work environment to suit your style. After that is a date with the Dock. And last but certainly not least, you discover ways you can use the Finder to make life with Mountain Lion ever so much easier.

So get comfortable, roll up your sleeves, fire up your Mac if you like, and settle down with Part I, a delightful little section I like to think of as "The Hassle-Free Way to Get Started with OS X Mountain Lion."





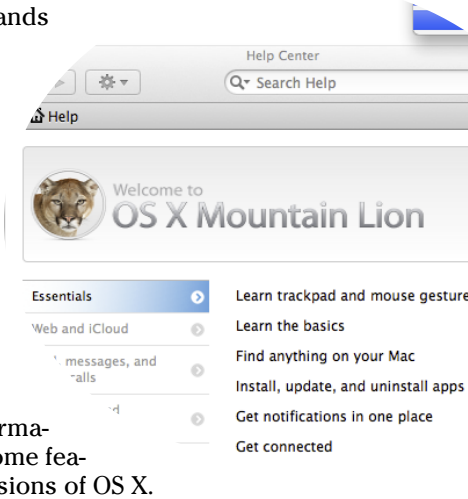
1

OS X Mountain Lion 101 (Prerequisites: None)

In This Chapter

- Understanding what an operating system is and is not
- Turning on your Mac
- Getting to know the startup process
- Turning off your Mac
- Avoiding major Mac mistakes
- Pointing, clicking, dragging, and other uses for your mouse
- Getting help from your Mac

Congratulate yourself on choosing OS X, which stands for *Macintosh Operating System X* — that's the Roman numeral *ten,* not the letter *X* (pronounced *ten,* not *ex).* You made a smart move because you scored more than just an operating-system upgrade. OS X Mountain Lion includes several new features that make using your Mac easier and dozens of improvements that help you do more work in less time.



In this chapter, I start at the very beginning and talk about OS X in mostly abstract terms; then I move on to explain what you need to know to use OS X Mountain Lion successfully.

If you've been using OS X for a while, some of the information in this chapter might seem hauntingly familiar; some features that I describe haven't changed from earlier versions of OS X. But if you decide to skip this chapter because you think you have all the new

stuff figured out, I assure you that you'll miss at least a couple of things that Apple didn't bother to tell you (as if you read every word in OS X Help — the only user manual Apple provides — anyway!).

Tantalized? Let's rock.

There is one last thing: If you're about to upgrade to Mountain Lion from an earlier version of OS X, you might want to peruse the Appendix first. It describes the process of installing or reinstalling Mountain Lion in full and loving detail, and has other useful information about installing Mountain Lion. 'Nuff said.

Gnawing to the Core of OS X

The operating system (that is, the *OS* in *OS X)* is what makes a Mac a Mac. Without it, your Mac is a pile of silicon and circuits — no smarter than a toaster.

"So what does an operating system do?" you ask. Good question. The short answer is that an operating system controls the basic and most important functions of your computer. In the case of OS X and your Mac, the operating system

- Manages memory
- Controls how windows, icons, and menus work
- Keeps track of files
- Manages networking
- Does housekeeping (No kidding!)

Other forms of software, such as word processors and web browsers, rely on the operating system to create and maintain the environment in which they work their magic. When you create a memo, for example, the word processor provides the tools for you to type and format the information. In the background, the operating system is the muscle for the word processor, performing crucial functions such as the following:

- Providing the mechanism for drawing and moving the on-screen window in which you write the memo
- Keeping track of a file when you save it
- Helping the word processor create drop-down menus and dialogs for you to interact with

- Communicating with other programs
- And much, much more (stuff that only geeks could care about)

So, armed with a little background in operating systems, take a gander at the next section before you do anything else with your Mac.

One last thing: As I mention in the introduction (I'm repeating it here only in case you normally don't read introductions), OS X Mountain Lion comes with more than 50 applications. Although I'd love to tell you all about each and every one, I have only so many pages at my disposal. If you need more info on the programs I don't cover, may I (again) recommend *OS X Mountain Lion All-in-One For Dummies,* written by Mark L. Chambers, or *iLife For Dummies,* written by my old friends Tony Bove and Cheryl Rhodes (both published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).

The Mac advantage

Most of the world's personal computers use Microsoft Windows (though more and more people are switching to the Mac these days). But you're among the lucky few to have a computer with an operating system that's intuitive, easy to use, and (dare I say?) fun. If you don't believe me, try using Windows for a day or two. Go ahead. You probably won't suffer any permanent damage. In fact, you'll really begin to appreciate how good you have it. Feel free to hug your Mac. Or give it a peck on the disc-drive slot (assuming your Mac has one; some, like the MacBook Air and Mac Mini, don't.). Just try not to get your tongue caught.

As someone once told me, "Claiming that the Macintosh is inferior to Windows because most people use Windows is like saying that all other restaurants serve food that's inferior to McDonald's."

We might be a minority, but Mac users have the best, most stable, most modern all-purpose operating system in the world, and here's why: Unix, on which OS X is based, is widely regarded as the best industrial-strength operating system on the planet. For now, just know that being based on Unix means that a Mac running OS X will crash less often than an older Mac or a Windows machine, which means less downtime. Being Unix-based also means far fewer viruses and malicious software. But perhaps the biggest advantage OS X has is that when an application crashes, it doesn't crash your entire computer, and you don't have to restart the whole computer to continue working.

By the way, with the advent of Intel-powered Macs a few years ago, you can now run Windows natively. That's right — you can now install and run Microsoft Windows on any Mac powered by an Intel processor, as described in Chapter 17. Don't let that Unix stuff scare you. It's there if you want it, but if you don't want it or don't care (like most of us), you'll rarely even know it's there. In fact, you'll rarely (if ever) see the word *Unix* again in this book. As far as you're concerned, Unix under the hood means your Mac will just run and run and run without crashing and crashing and crashing.

A Safety Net for the Absolute Beginner (Or Any User)

In the following sections, I deal with the stuff that OS X Help doesn't cover — or doesn't cover in nearly enough detail. If you're a first-time Macintosh user, please, *please* read this section of the book carefully; it could save your life. Okay, okay, perhaps I'm being overly dramatic. What I mean to say is that reading this section could save your *Mac* or your sanity. Even if you're an experienced Mac user, you might want to read this section. Chances are you'll see at least a few things you might have forgotten that will come in handy now that you've been reminded of them.

Turning the dang thing on

Okay. This is the big moment — turning on your Mac! Gaze at it longingly first, and say something cheesy, such as "You're the most awesome computer I've ever known." If that doesn't turn on your Mac (and it probably won't), keep reading.

Apple, in its infinite wisdom, has manufactured Macs with power buttons on every conceivable surface: on the front, side, and back of the computer itself and even on the keyboard or monitor.

So if you don't know how to turn on your Mac, don't feel bad; just look in the manual or booklet that came with your Mac. It's at least one thing that the documentation *always* covers.

These days, most Macs have a power-on button near the keyboard (notebooks) or the back (iMacs). It usually looks like the little circle thingie you see in the margin.

Don't bother choosing Help➪Mac Help, which opens the Help Viewer program. It can't tell you where the switch is. Although the Help program is good for finding out a lot of things, the location of the power switch isn't among them. If you haven't found the switch and turned on the Mac, of course, you can't access Help anyway. (D'oh!)

What you should see on startup

When you finally do turn on your Macintosh, you set in motion a sophisticated and complex series of events that culminates in the loading of OS X and the appearance of the OS X Desktop. After a small bit of whirring, buzzing, and flashing (meaning that the operating system is loading), OS X first tests all your hardware — slots, ports, disks, random-access memory (RAM), and so on. If everything passes, you hear a pleasing musical tone and see the

tasteful gray Apple logo in the middle of your screen, along with a small spinning-pinwheel cursor somewhere on the screen. Both are shown in Figure 1-1.

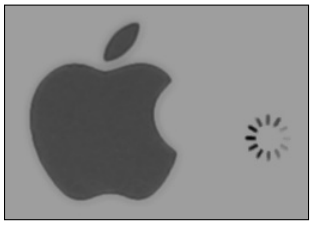


Figure 1-1: This is what you'll see if everything is fine and dandy when you turn on your Mac.

Here are the things that might happen when you power up your Mac:

- **Fine and dandy:** Next, you might or might not see the OS X login screen, where you enter your name and password. If you do, press Return or Enter (after you type your name and password, of course), and away you go.

  If you don't want to have to type your name and password every time you start or restart your Mac (or even if you do), check out Chapter 17 for the scoop on how to turn the login screen on or off.

  Either way, the Desktop soon materializes before your eyes. If you haven't customized, configured, or tinkered with your Desktop, it should look pretty much like Figure 1-2. Now is a good time to take a moment for positive thoughts about the person who convinced you that you wanted a Mac. That person was right!

Figure 1-2: The OS X Mountain Lion Desktop after a brand-spanking-new installation of OS X.

The legend of boot

Boot this. *Boot* that. "I *booted* my Mac and. . . ." or "Did it *boot?*" and so on. Talking about computers for long without hearing the *boot* word is nearly impossible. But why *boot*? Why not *shoe* or *shirt* or even *shazam?*

Back in the very olden days — say, 1958 or a little earlier — starting a computer required you to toggle little manual switches on the front panel, which began an internal process that loaded the operating system. The process became known as *bootstrapping* because if you toggled the right switches, the computer would "pull itself up by its bootstraps." This phrase didn't take long to transmogrify into *booting* and finally to *boot.*

Over the years, *booting* has come to mean turning on almost any computer or even a peripheral device, such as a printer. Some people also use it to refer to launching an application ("I booted Excel").

So the next time one of your gearhead friends says the b-word, ask whether he knows where the term comes from. Then dazzle him with the depth and breadth of your (not-quite-useful) knowledge!

- **Blue/black/gray screen of death:** If any of your hardware fails when it's tested, you might see a blue, black, or gray screen.

  Some older Macs played the sound of a horrible car wreck instead of the chimes, complete with crying tires and busting glass. It was exceptionally unnerving, which might be why Apple doesn't use it anymore.

  The fact that something went wrong is no reflection on your prowess as a Macintosh user. Something is broken, and your Mac may need repairs. If this is happening to you right now, check out Chapter 20 to try to get your Mac well again.

  If your computer is under warranty, dial 1-800-SOS-APPL, and a customer-service person can tell you what to do. Before you do anything, though, skip ahead to Chapter 20. It's entirely possible that one of the suggestions there can get you back on track without your having to spend even a moment on hold.

- **Prohibitory sign (formerly known as the flashing-question-mark disk):** Most users eventually encounter the prohibitory sign shown in the left margin (which replaced the flashing question-mark-on-a-disk icon and flashing folder icon back in OS X Jaguar). This icon means that your Mac can't find a startup disk, hard drive, network server, or DVD-ROM

containing a valid Macintosh operating system. See Chapter 20 for ways to ease your Mac's ills.

- **Kernel panic:** You shouldn't see this very often, but you might occasionally see a block of text in four languages, including English, as shown in Figure 1-3. This means that your Mac has experienced a *kernel panic,* the most severe type of system crash. If you restart your Mac and see this message again, look in Chapter 20 for a myriad of possible cures for all kinds of ailments, including this one.

Figure 1-3: If this is what you're seeing, things are definitely *not* fine and dandy.

How do you know which version of the Mac OS your computer has? Simple:

1. **Choose About This Mac from the menu (the menu with the symbol in the top-left corner of the menu bar).**

   The About This Mac window pops up on your screen, as shown in Figure 1-4. The version you're running appears just below *OS X* in the center of the window. Version 10.8 is the release we know as *Mountain Lion.*

   If you're curious or just want to impress your friends, OS X version 10.7 was known as Lion; 10.6 as Snow Leopard; 10.5 as Leopard; 10.4 as Tiger; 10.3 as Panther; 10.2 as Jaguar; 10.1 as Puma; and 10.0 as Cheetah.

2. **Click the More Info button to launch the System Information application.**

   This app shows you much more information, including bus speed, number of processors, caches, installed memory, networking, storage devices, and much more. You can find more about this useful program in Chapter 19.

Figure 1-4: See which version of OS X you're running.

Shutting down properly

Turning off the power without shutting down your Mac properly is one of the worst things you can do to your poor Mac. Shutting down your Mac improperly can really screw up your hard drive, scramble the contents of your most important files, or both.

If a thunderstorm is rumbling nearby, or you're unfortunate enough to have rolling blackouts where you live, you might really want to shut down your Mac. (See the next section, where I briefly discuss lightning and your Mac.)

To turn off your Mac, always use the Shut Down command on the menu or shut down in one of these kind-and-gentle ways:

- Press the Power key once and then click the Shut Down button in the Are You Sure You Want To Shut Down Your Computer Now? dialog.
- On keyboards that don't have a Power key, press Control+Eject instead — and then click the Shut Down button that appears in the Are You Sure You Want To Shut Down Your Computer Now? dialog.

You can use a handy keyboard shortcut when the Shut Down button (or any button, for that matter) is highlighted in blue and pulsating slightly. Pressing the Return or Enter key is the same as clicking that button.

Eternally yours . . . *now*

OS X is designed so that you never have to shut it down. You can configure it to sleep after a specified period of inactivity. (See Chapter 17 for more info on the Energy Saver features of OS X.) If you do so, your Mac will consume very little electricity when it's sleeping and will usually be ready to use (when you press any key or click the mouse) in less than a minute. On the other hand, if you're not going to be using it for a few days, you might want to shut it down anyway.

Note: If you leave your Mac on constantly, and you're gone when a lightning storm or rolling blackout hits, your Mac might get wasted. So be sure you have adequate protection — say, a decent surge protector designed specifically for computers — if you decide to leave your Mac on and unattended for long periods. See the section "A few things you should definitely NOT do with your Mac," elsewhere in this chapter, for more info on lightning and your Mac. Often as not, I leave it on when I'm on the road so that I can access it from my laptop via remote screen sharing. So because OS X is designed to run 24/7, I don't shut it down at night unless the night happens to be dark and stormy.

The Are You Sure You Want To Shut Down Your Computer Now? dialog sports a check-box option in OS X Mountain Lion: Reopen Windows When Logging Back In. If you check this box, your Mac will start back up with the same windows (and applications) that were open when you shut down or restarted. I think it's pretty darn sweet! I'm happy to report that Mountain Lion is full of such nice little improvements.

Most Mac users have been forced to shut down improperly more than once without anything horrible happening, of course — but don't be lulled into a false sense of security. Break the rules one time too many (or under the wrong circumstances), and your most important files *will* be toast. The *only* time you should turn off your Mac without shutting down properly is when your screen is completely frozen or when your system crashed due to a kernel panic and you've already tried everything else. (See Chapter 20 for what those "everything else"s are.) A really stubborn crash doesn't happen often — and less often under OS X than ever before — but when it does, forcing your Mac to turn off and then back on might be the only solution.

A few things you should definitely NOT do with your Mac

In this section, I cover the bad stuff that can happen to your computer if you do the wrong things with it. If something bad has already happened to you — I know . . . I'm beginning to sound like a broken record — see Chapter 20.

- **Don't unplug your Mac when it's turned on.** Very bad things can happen, such as having your operating system break. See the preceding section, where I discuss shutting down your system properly.

  Note that this warning doesn't apply to laptops as long as their battery is at least partially charged. As long as there's enough juice in the battery to power your Mac, you can connect and disconnect its power adapter to your heart's content.

- **Don't use your Mac when lightning is near.** Here's a simple life equation for you: Mac + lightning = dead Mac. 'Nuff said. Oh, and don't place much faith in inexpensive surge protectors. A good jolt of lightning will fry the surge protector and your computer — as well as possibly frying your modem, printer, and anything else plugged into the surge protector. Some surge protectors can withstand most lightning strikes, but those warriors aren't the cheapies that you buy at your local computer emporium. Unplugging your Mac from the wall during electrical storms is safer and less expensive. (Don't forget to unplug your external modem, network hubs, printers, and other hardware that plugs into the wall as well; lightning can fry them, too.)

  For laptops, disconnect the power adapter and all other cables (because whatever those cables are connected to could fry, and fry your laptop right along with it). That said, you could use your laptop during a storm, if you like. Just make sure that it's 100 percent wireless and cableless if you do.

- **Don't jostle, bump, shake, kick, throw, dribble, or punt your Mac, especially while it's running.** Most Macs contain a hard drive that spins at 4,200 revolutions per minute (rpm) or more. A jolt to a hard drive while it's reading or writing a file can cause the head to crash into the disk, which can render many — or all — files on it unrecoverable. Ouch!

- **Don't forget to back up your data!** If the stuff on your hard drive means anything to you, you must back it up. Not *maybe*. *Must.* Even if your most important file is your last saved game of Bejeweled, you still need to back up your files. Fortunately, OS X Mountain Lion includes an awesome backup utility called Time Machine. (Unfortunately, you need either an external hard drive or an Apple Time Capsule device to take advantage of it.) So I beg you: Please read Chapter 18 now, and find out how to back up before something horrible happens to your valuable data!

I *strongly* recommend that you read Chapter 18 sooner rather than later — preferably before you do any significant work on your Mac. Dr. Macintosh says, "There are only two kinds of Mac users: Those who have lost data and those who will." Which kind do you want to be?

- **Don't kiss your monitor while wearing stuff on your lips.** For obvious reasons! Use a clean, soft cloth and/or OmniCleanz display cleaning solution (I love the stuff, made by RadTech; `www.radtech.us`) to clean your display.

  Don't use household window cleaners or paper towels. Either one can harm your display. Use a soft clean cloth, and if you're going to use a cleaner, make sure it's specifically designed not to harm computer displays. (And spray it on the *cloth,* not the screen.)

Point-and-click boot camp

Are you new to the Mac? Just figuring out how to move the mouse around? Now is a good time to go over some fundamental stuff that you need to know for just about everything you'll be doing on the Mac. Spend a few minutes reading this section, and soon you'll be clicking, double-clicking, pressing, and pointing all over the place. If you think you have the whole mousing thing pretty much figured out, feel free to skip this section. I'll catch you on the other side.

Still with me? Good. Now for some basic terminology:

- **Point:** Before you can click or press anything, you have to *point* to it. Place your hand on your mouse, and move it so that the cursor arrow is over the object you want — like on top of an icon or a button.
- **Click:** Also called *single click.* Use your index finger to push the mouse button all the way down and then let go so the button produces a satisfying clicking sound. (If you have one of the new optical Apple Pro mice, you push down the whole thing to click.) Use a single-click to highlight an icon, press a button, or activate a check box or window.

  In other words, first you point and then you click — *point and click,* in computer lingo.
- **Double-click:** *Click twice* in rapid succession. With a little practice, you can perfect this technique in no time. Use a double-click to open a folder or to launch a file or application.
- **Control-click:** Hold down the Control key while single-clicking. Control-clicking is the same as right-clicking a Windows system and displays a menu (called a *contextual menu*) where you Control-clicked. In fact, if you're blessed with a two-or-more-button mouse such as the Apple Magic Mouse, you can right-click and avoid having to hold down the Control key. (You may have to enable this feature in the Mouse System Preference pane.)

If you have a Mac with a built-in trackpad or Apple Magic Trackpad, you can configure it to recognize a two-fingered tap as a right-click. (You may have to enable this feature in the Trackpad System Preference pane.)

- **Drag:** *Dragging* something usually means you have to click it first and hold down the mouse button. Then you move the mouse on your desk or mouse pad so that the cursor and whatever you select moves across the screen. The combination of holding down the button and dragging the mouse is usually referred to as *clicking and dragging*.
- **Choosing an item from a menu:** To get to Mac OS menu commands, you must first open a menu and then pick the option you want. Point at the name of the menu you want with your cursor, press the mouse button down, and then drag downward until you select the command you want. When the command is highlighted, finish selecting by letting go of the mouse button.

If you're a longtime Mac user, you probably hold down the mouse button the whole time between clicking the name of the menu and selecting the command you want. You can still do it that way, but you can also click the menu name to open it, release the mouse button, drag down to the item you want to select, *and then click again*. In other words, OS X menus stay open after you click them, even if you're not holding down the mouse button. After you click a menu to open it, you can even type the first letter (or letters) of the item to select it and then execute that item by pressing the spacebar or the Return or Enter key.

A menu remains open until you click something else. Go ahead and give it a try . . . I'll wait.

The terms given in the preceding list apply to all Mac laptop, desktop, and tower systems. If you use a MacBook, MacBook Pro, or Apple Magic Trackpad, however, there are a few more terms — such as *tap*, *swipe*, *rotate*, *pinch*, and *spread* — you'll want to add to your lexicon. You can read all about them in full and loving detail in Chapter 3.

Not Just a Beatles Movie: Help and the Help Menu

One of the best features about all Macs is the excellent built-in help, and OS X Mountain Lion doesn't cheat you on that legacy: This system has online help in abundance. When you have a question about how to do something, the Help Center is the first place you should visit (after this book, of course).

Clicking the Help menu reveals the Search Help field at the top of the menu and the Mac Help item, which opens the Mac Help window, as shown in Figure 1-5.

Figure 1-5: Mac Help is nothing if not helpful.

The keyboard shortcut for Help appears on the Help menu as ⌘+?, but you really need to press Shift+⌘+? to open Help using the keyboard.

Just so you know, this is the only shortcut I can think of in which the menu doesn't display an up arrow (Shift+⌘+?) to let you know that you need to press Shift.

You can find out much more about keyboard shortcuts in Chapter 3.

To use Mac Help, simply type a word or phrase in either Search field — the one in the Help menu itself or the one near the top of the Help window on the right side — and then press Return or Enter. In a few seconds, your Mac

provides you one or more articles to read, which (theoretically) are related to your question. Usually. If you type **menus** and press Return, for example, you get 17 help topics, as shown in Figure 1-6.

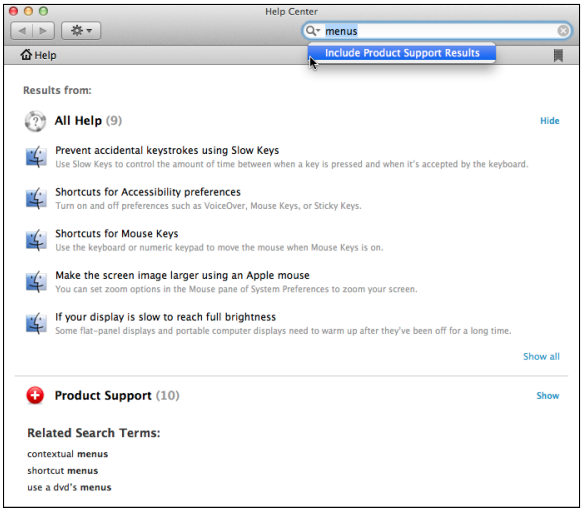


Figure 1-6: You have questions? Mac has answers.

As long as your Mac is connected to the Internet, search results include articles from Apple's online support database by default. Click the magnifying-glass icon to the left of the Search field, as shown in Figure 1-6, if you want to disable this feature.

I can't think of any reason why you'd want to disable this useful feature, but I want you to know that you can if you like.

Although you don't have to be connected to the Internet to use Mac Help, you do need an Internet connection to get the most out of it. (Chapter 10 can help you set up an Internet connection, if you don't have one.) That's because OS X installs only certain help articles on your hard drive. If you ask a question that those articles don't answer, Mac Help connects to Apple's website and downloads the answer (assuming that you have an active Internet connection). These answers are the Support Articles, denoted by a plus sign (as shown at the bottom of the window in Figure 1-6, earlier in this chapter). Click one of these entries, and Help Viewer retrieves the text over the Internet. Although this can sometimes be inconvenient, it's also quite smart. This way, Apple can update the Help system at any time without requiring any action from you.

Furthermore, after you've asked a question and Mac Help has grabbed the answer from the Apple website, the answer remains on your hard drive forever. If you ask for it again — even at a later date — your computer won't have to download it from the Apple website again.

Finally, here's a cool feature I like to call *automatic visual help cues.* Here's how they work:

1. **Type a word or phrase in the Help menu's Search field.**
2. **Select any item that has a menu icon to its left (such as the Secure Empty Trash item in Figure 1-7).**

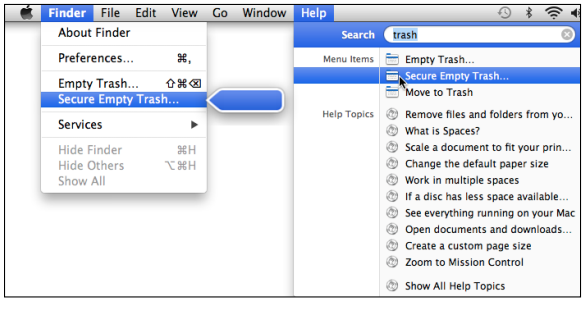


Figure 1-7: If you choose an item with a menu icon, an arrow points to that item in context.

The automatic visual cue — an arrow — appears, pointing at that command in the appropriate menu.

2

The Desktop and Windows and Menus (Oh My)!

In This Chapter

- Checking out the parts of a window
- Dealing with dealie-boppers in windows
- Resizing, moving, and closing windows
- Getting comfortable with menu basics

This chapter introduces important features of OS X, starting with the first thing you see when you log in: the Finder and its Desktop. After a quick look around the Desktop, you get a look into two of its most useful features: windows and menus.

Windows are (and have always been) an integral part of Macintosh computing. Windows in the Finder (or, as a PC user would say, "on the Desktop") show you the contents of the hard drive, optical drive, flash (thumb) drive, network drive, disk image, and folder icons; windows in applications do many things. The point is that windows are part of what makes your Mac a Mac; knowing how they work — and how to use them — is essential.

Menus are another quintessential part of the Macintosh experience. The latter part of this chapter starts you out with a few menu basics. As needed, I direct you to other parts of the book for greater detail. So relax and don't worry. By the end of this chapter, you'll be ready to work with windows and menus in any application that uses them (and most applications, games excluded, do).

Touring the Finder and Its Desktop

The Finder is the program that creates the Desktop, keeps track of your files and folders, and is always running. Just about everything you do on your Mac begins and ends with the Finder. It's where you manage files, store documents, launch programs, and much more. If you ever expect to master your Mac, the first step is to master the Finder and its Desktop. Check out the default Mac Finder and Desktop for OS X Mountain Lion in Figure 2-1.

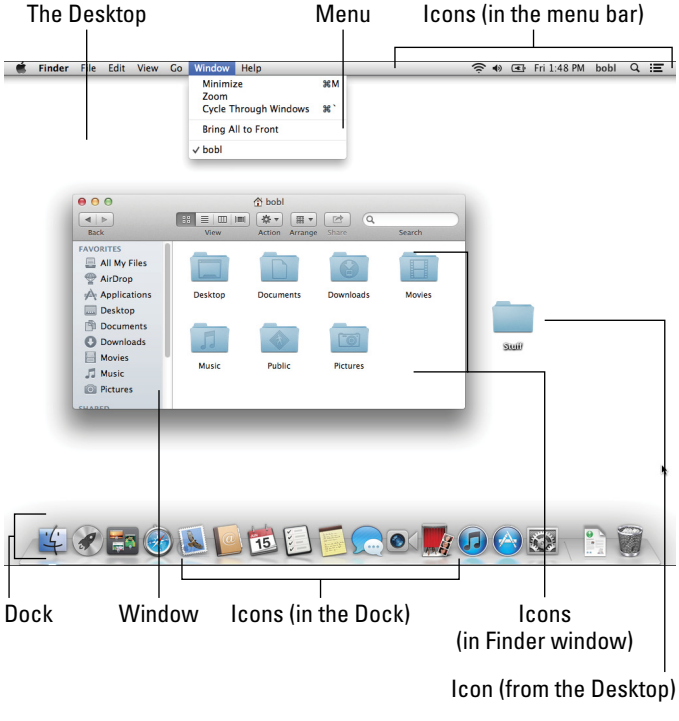


Figure 2-1: The default Mountain Lion Finder and Desktop.

The Finder is the center of your Mac OS experience, so before I go any further, here's a quick description of its most prominent features:

- **Desktop:** The Desktop is the area behind the windows and the Dock, where your hard-drive icon (ordinarily) lives. The Desktop isn't a window, yet it acts like one. Like a folder window or drive window, the Desktop can contain icons. But unlike most windows, which require a bit of navigation to get to, the Desktop is a great place for things you use a lot, such as folders, applications, or particular documents.

Some folks use the terms *Desktop* and *Finder* interchangeably to refer to the total Macintosh environment you see after you log in — the icons, windows, menus, and all that other cool stuff. Just to make things confusing, the background you see on your screen — the picture behind your hard-drive icon and your open windows — is *also* called the Desktop. In this book, I refer to the application you use when the Desktop is showing as the *Finder.* When I say *Desktop,* I'm talking about the picture background behind your windows and the Dock, which you can use as a storage place for icons if you want.

To make things even more confusing, the Desktop is a full-screen representation of the icons in the Desktop folder inside your Home folder. Don't panic — this is all explained in more detail in Chapter 6.

- **Dock:** The Dock is the Finder's main navigation shortcut tool. It makes getting to frequently used icons easy, even when you have a screen full of windows. Like the Desktop, the Dock is a great place for the folders, applications, and specific documents you use most. Besides putting your frequently used icons at your fingertips, it's extremely customizable; read more about it in Chapter 4.
- **Icons:** Icons are the little pictures you see in your windows and even on your Desktop. Icons represent the things you work with on your Mac, such as applications (programs), documents, folders, utilities, and more.
- **Windows:** Opening most icons (by double-clicking them) makes a window appear. Windows in the Finder show you the contents of hard-drive and folder icons, and windows in applications usually show you the contents of your documents. In the sections that follow, you can find the full scoop on Mountain Lion windows, which may be different from Mac windows in previous OS releases.
- **Menus:** Menus let you choose to do things, such as create new folders; duplicate files; cut, copy, or paste text; and so on. I introduce menu basics later in this chapter in the "Menu Basics" section; you find details about working with menus for specific tasks throughout this book.

Whereas this section offers a basic introduction to the Finder and Desktop, Chapter 5 explains in detail how to navigate and manage your files in the Finder. You find out how to use the Finder toolbar, navigate folders and subfolders, and switch among views, among other things. But before you start using the Finder, it helps to know the basics of working with windows and menus; if these Mac features are new to you, I suggest that you read this entire chapter and pay special attention to Chapter 5 later.

Anatomy of a Window

Windows are a ubiquitous part of using a Mac. When you open a folder, you see a window. When you write a letter, the document that you're working on

appears in a window. When you browse the Internet, web pages appear in a window . . . and so on.

For the most part, windows are windows from program to program. You'll probably notice that some programs (Adobe Photoshop or Microsoft Word, for example) take liberties with windows by adding features (such as pop-up menus) or textual information (such as zoom percentage or file size) in the scroll-bar area of a document window.

Don't let it bug you; that extra fluff is just window dressing (pun intended). Maintaining the window metaphor, many information windows display different kinds of information in different *panes,* or discrete sections within the window.

And so, without further ado, the following list gives you a look at the main features of a typical Finder window (as shown in Figure 2-2). I discuss these features in greater detail in later sections of this chapter.

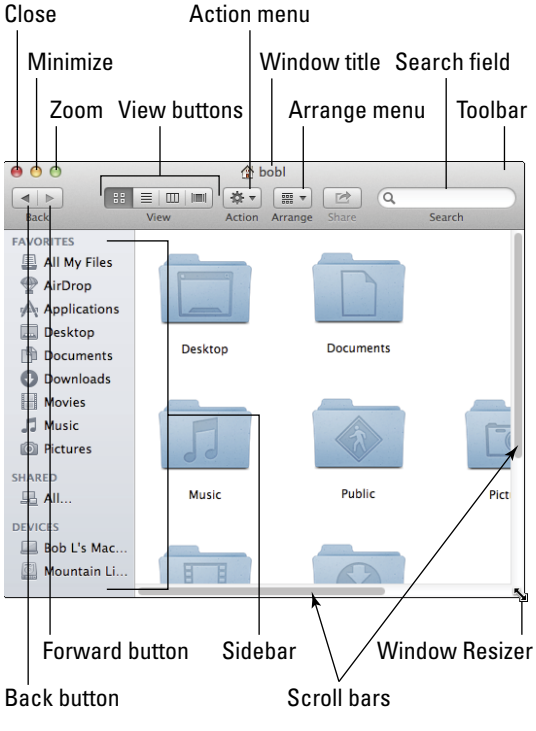


Figure 2-2: A typical Finder window in OS X Mountain Lion.

If your windows don't look exactly like the one shown in Figure 2-2, don't be concerned. You can make your windows look and feel any way you like. As I explain later in the "Working with Windows" section, moving and resizing windows are easy tasks. Chapter 3 explains how to customize certain window features. Chapter 5 focuses on ways you can change a window's view, specifically when you're using the Finder.

Meanwhile, here's what you see (clockwise from top left):

- **Close, Minimize, and Zoom (gumdrop) buttons:** Shut 'em, shrink and place 'em in the Dock, and make 'em grow.
- **View buttons:** Choose among four exciting views of your window: Icon, List, Column, and Cover Flow. Find out more about views in Chapter 5.

- **Arrange menu:** Click this little doohickey to arrange this window's icons by Kind, Application, Date Modified, Date Created, Date Last Opened, Date Added, Size, or Label. Or, of course, by None.
- **Action button:** This button is really a pop-up menu of commands you can apply to currently selected items in the Finder window or on the Desktop. (These are generally the same commands you'd see in the shortcut menu if you right-clicked or Control-clicked the same items.)
- **Window title:** Shows the name of the window.

  ⌘-click the name of the window to see a pop-up menu with the complete path to this folder (try it). This tip applies to most windows you'll encounter, not just Finder windows. So ⌘-click a window's title and you'll usually see the path to it's enclosing folder on your disk.

  You can also have the path displayed at the bottom of every Finder window by choosing View➪Show Path Bar, as shown in the active window (Applications) in Figure 2-4.

- **Search field:** Type a string of characters here, and OS X Mountain Lion digs into your system to find items that match by filename or document contents (yes, words within documents).
- **Toolbar:** Buttons for frequently used commands and actions.
- **Icon Resizer:** Use this slider control to change the size of the icons in this window. (Note that this control appears on windows only in the Icon view, which you find out all about in Chapter 5.)
- **Scroll bars:** Use the scroll bars for moving around a window.
- **Sidebar:** Frequently used items live here.
- **Forward and Back buttons:** These buttons take you to the next or previous folder displayed in this particular window.